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The Professor

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The Professor.

Eldridge Entertainment House
Franklin, - Ohio.

PROF. GRINDEM:

His Commencement.

A PLAY

In Three Acts, and an Epilogue.

H. REA WOODMAN, M. A.
Author of "The Sweet Girl Graduates" and
"She Organized A Club."

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1907

(DEDICATION)

Again—and yet again—to my dear Boys and Girls of the Class of 1902, with my undiminished affection.

SYNOPSIS.

ACT I The Hallway of the Grindem Home, Monday Morning, June 3rd, at 10 o'clock.

"Well we'll take up these troubles one at a time."

ACT II The Office of Professor Grindem, Rafton High School. Wednesday Morning, June 5th, at 9 o'clock.

"When's our time coming? I'm getting gray-headed!"

ACT III The Stage of the Duval Theater, Thursday Afternoon, June 6th, at 4 o'clock.

"Yes Galliger it's been a hard week!"

EPILOGUE The Library of the Grindem Home, Friday Morning.

. The innocent sleep
Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleave of care,
. sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course"

CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY.

Professor John Grindem, Principal of the Rafton High School.
A busy man who does the work of ten.

Mrs. Martha Morton Grindem, His wife.
Who knows "very little about the school, really."

Mrs. William Morton, His Mother-in-Law.
Who has never visited "Dear John" before.

Professor Markam Wright, His Assistant.
Who is scholarly and absent-minded.

Galliger Gurdy, A Black Sheep, likewise "A Special."

Margaret Woodward, otherwise 'Babe,' a Freshman.

Mr. Frank Sawyer, President of the Graduating Class.

Bessie Tapping, Class Historian.

Miss Millicent Cameron, (from Philadelphia) A Favorite Pupil.

Mame Hensell, a Junior, Leading Lady in "She Stoops to Conquer."

Miss Sophia Spalding, Teacher of Elocution

J. P. Thompson, Esq., President of the Board of Education.

Mary, the Maid.

Carpenters, Messengers, Florists, and Attendants.

Act 1.

(*Hallway of the Gridem Home, Monday morning, June 3d, at 10 o'clock. A stack of papers on the side table, another on the hall rack. The front door being open, through the screen door one can see the piazza and open sky. Mr. Frank Sawyer is discovered, reading.*)

Frank: (*After reading a bit in silence, he consults watch.*) Ten o'clock, and I got a date at half-past!
(*A step on the piazza, and 'Babe' Woodward, in beflowered hat, appears at the screen door, opens it wide, and comes in.*)

Frank: Hello, Babe! What are you doing here?

Babe: (*picking up fan and fanning vigorously*) Want to see Professor right off about the Hall. Galliger says the Glee Club has it for Wednesday night. My, it's hot!

Frank: (*running through the leaves of the magazine idly*) Got it for what?

Babe: (*peeling off her long gloves*) Wednesday night.

Frank: Got it for *what*, I said, not for *when*. The Glee Club's tonight.

Babe: That's what I told Galliger, but he said he guessed he knew, as he made all their dates.

Frank: Maybe they've changed it. Galliger ought to know. What do *you* want with the Hall?

Babe (*beginning to reverse the fingers of her gloves*) It's hot enough for August, I declare! I've been 'way down to the

Duval, and I'm most melted! It's Wright that's got us so mixed. If he'd let things alone—always wanting to do everything, and then forgetting what he's done! He told Bob Martin that we could have it, and Bob engaged it and paid for it. Awfully expensive, too, I think. Everybody says fifteen dollars is too much, and five for light. The lighting ought to be counted in, don't you think? Bob says—

Frank: (*patiently*) What do you want with the Hall, I said?

Babe: (*fanning with vigor*) It's awful hot! I bet I look like a fright. I'm on the Freshman Committee for the Junior play, you know.

Frank: I don't see how you kids get in the Junior play.

Babe: Where have you been all your life? The Freshmen always engage the hall and do the decorating for the Junior Play—make *all* the arrangements. Has it been a million years since you were a Freshman, Mr. Sawyer?

Frank: (*with cold dignity*) All we did when I was a Freshman was to usher.

Babe: (*with crushing scorn*) I suppose that is all *you* were capable of doing! But he'll have to settle it.

Frank: Who?

Babe: Professor Grindem.

Frank: He isn't here.

Babe: (*looking around apprehensively*) Here?

Frank: I don't mean under the table! He's off somewhere—a Board meeting, I think Mrs. Grindem said.

Babe: (*smoothing out her gloves*) Is she at home?

Frank: (*taking up one of her gloves*) Yes. She cut through here a while ago looking like a fright in a green kiroma.

Babe: (*dimpling*) Kimona you mean. Give me my glove! (*snatches for it*).

Frank: (*putting it into his pocket*) Oh, I don't know! I'm making a collection.

Babe: Yes, you are! A collection of one, I reckon! Give me my glove!

(*Galliger Gurdy appears at the screen door.*)

Galliger: (*through the door*) Hello! Grindem in, my early birds?

Babe: No, not just this minute. He will be back shortly.

Galliger: (*comes into the room, bows low, hand on heart*) Ah, an unexpected pleasure! Mr. President and The Infant, pert and pinky, frivolous and flirtatious! I come hither, friends, with news.

Babe: What? Galliger, make him give me my glove!

Galliger: (*sits on the corner of the table*) My dear Infant, who am I that I should succor distressed beauty? I come not here to talk. Where's Grindem?

Frank: (*opens a magazine and begins to read*) He's at the office.

Babe: You told me he was at a Board meeting.

Frank: (*reading*) He's probably bored wherever he is.

Galliger: Most probably. If he's at a Board meeting, what are you waiting for?

Frank: (*yawning*) Grindem.
Gaines. (*stoops to pick up papers*)

Babe: Galliger, who's President of the Glee Club?

Galliger: (*getting up, thereby upsetting papers*)

Gaines. (*stoops to pick up papers*) Examination papers, by George! English History!

Babe: (*assisting*) Are they marked?

Galliger: No, he won't get to that till next summer! (*heaps them on the table in a tumbled mass*) I'd burn 'em, and give us all one hundred.

Babe: I thought you said *you* made the dates for the Glee Club?

Galliger: So I did, and so I do. Gaines is President; I am Manager. I do the work; he does the stunts; I get the knocks, he gets the glory. I'm off if Grindem isn't here. (*takes up his cap.*)

Babe: (*with a fascinating smile*) But he's coming. Besides, I want to know—

Galliger: So is Emancipation Day! I've got to see him right away. The push isn't going to the reception if he doesn't change the date.

Frank: (*looking up from magazine*) What push?

Galliger: The Rafton Reds. That's the night of our banquet and we won't postpone it.

Frank: (*coldly*) Well, I guess that won't stop the reception. That's the regular time for the Senior Reception, and the Reds knew it. They ought to have made other arrangements.

Babe: But the Reds ought to be there, I think.

(*Bessie Tapping steps briskly up to the screen door, opens it, and bounces into the room.*)

Bessie: (*dropping several things*) Where's Professor? I'm mighty glad to see *you,* Frank Sawyer! If you want a decent history of this class, why don't

you help me get it up? And now they want it in verse! Why didn't they say so six weeks ago! And I can't find half the people! I can't just *guess* where they were born and what color of hair their mothers had! Here I've been chasing around all day——

Galliger: The day is young.

Babe: Sit down, dear. Your hat's on crooked.

Frank: (*yawning*) Yes, sit down, and let the course of empire take its way westward!

Bessie: (*sitting on the very edge of a stiff chair*) Do you want 'em arranged in chronological order, or don't you?

(*commences to sort loose pages of manuscript.*)

Babe: Of course. Who ever heard of history that wasn't chronological?

Galliger: (*taking a box of candy from his pocket*) Yes, J. Cæsar was born before G. Washington. It was his good fortune. G. Washington would have wiped the earth up with him. Will the Infant partake of chocolate creams, or has she forsworn?

Bessie: (*preparing to write*) When did your father come West, Frank?

Galliger: Have some candy, Bess. Why this unwonted activity? Frank's father was an honest man—so far as we know.

Bessie: The history isn't half done, and I'm going to ask Professor Grindem—

Babe: (*nibbling a cream absently*) Galliger, when's the Glee Club?

Galliger: (*bolting a chocolate*) Tonight.

Babe: (*indignantly*) You said it wasn't, and Professor Wright said——

Galliger: Well it *wasn't* then. We had to change it. Why?

Babe: Why, we've hired the Hall for Wednesday night, paid for it and everything, and the Websters have hired it and paid for it, and they said the Glee Club told them——

Galliger: (*cheerfully, bolting another chocolate*) They're off! We never told them anything. The Glee Club's tonight at the Duval. I guess I ought to know. We had to take the Duval; Everett Hall is too small, you know.

Babe: Indeed! I suppose you expect the whole town to turn out?

Frank: It all comes of letting the Freshies run the Junior Play!

Bessie: (*looking up from her writing*) Where was Fanny Farren born?

Galliger: Give it up. Next!

Babe: Are you going to put their *ages* in? I wouldn't stand for that!

Bessie: How did you earn your first money, Frank, and what's your father's politics?

(*A timid step is heard, the door opens, and Professor Wright steps into the room with extreme circumspection.*)

Babe: (*flies at him*) Professor, did you tell Bob Martin—

Bessie (*flies at him, scattering papers*) Do you think, Professor, the History ought to rhyme, or not?

Frank: (*rising formally*) Professor Grindem isn't here, Professor. Won't you sit down?

Wright: Thank you, Frank. Where is—er, good morning, young ladies..

Babe: (*meekly*) Good morning, Professor. It

is very warm, isn't it? Let me take your hat. Would you like a fan?

Wright: No, I thank you, I never fan a use—I mean, use a fan.

Babe: (*sweetly*) It is very refreshing on a warm day. Let me fan you. I want to ask you if you told Bob Martin——

Bessie: (*hauling her chair close to him*) Good morning, Professor. I think blank verse is good enough, don't you? Do you, or don't you? And would you say the same things about every one? Or would you just make up things? Would you, or wouldn't you?

Galliger: It will be blank enough, I'll wager!

Wright: (*gazing helplessly at Bessie*) What—er,—to what do you have reference, Miss Tapping? Thank you, Miss Woodward, I am not warm.

Babe: Oh, I like to fan people.

Bessie: (*rustling among her papers*) The Class History.

Babe: It doesn't matter what you say in a Class History, do you think so, Professor? Nobody amounts to anything special at eighteen.

Frank: (*loftily*) Speak for yourself, Margaret Woodward! Because you have not accomplished anything doesn't signify——

Babe: (*serenely*) Now, Professor, you see it—oh, *won't* you have a piece of candy? Those flat, square ones are very nice. I've got to know what you did about that Hall. You told Bob Martin——

Galliger: Bob Martin never remembers what he's told over night!

Wright: (*dejectedly, looking from one to the other*) Yes, Miss Woodward, I am—

er—all attention. I am only—er—too happy to serve you.

Babe: (*beginning with great precision*) There seems to be a mistake somewhere. Let me explain the matter to you exactly as it is. You remember, you told Bob Martin——

Wright: (*dejectedly, but earnestly*) Yes, Miss Woodward.

Babe: You told Bob Martin that we could have the Hall for Wednesday night, and you told the Webster Club the same thing. And we hired it and paid for it and so did the Websters. Now, who is to have it?

Wright: What hall, Miss Woodward? My—er—memory does not serve me. I do not remember to have held a conversation with Mr. Robert Martin relative to any halls or——

Babe: Everett Hall. You remember. Bob came to you last Sunday night—a week ago, at your boarding house. You were at supper. You excused yourself, and came out into the hall.

Wright: You are correct. Mr. Robert Martin did call upon me about 6 o'clock one Sunday evening. He was in a hurry, and it was not perfectly clear to me at the time precisely what—

Babe: But he 'phoned to you the next day.

Wright: Oh, he did?

Frank: (*interposing firmly*) You see, Professor, it is this way. The Juniors give their play Wednesday night, and they want the Everett Hall——

Babe: We cannot afford the Duval, you know.

Frank: As they cannot afford the Duval, and you told them it was—

Babe: No, you told Bob Martin it was——

(*A heavy tread is heard on the piazza, and J. P. Thompson, Esq., appears at the screen door. Everybody stiffens.*)

Thompson: (*opening the door, and looking into the room*) Is Professor Grindem at home? (*looks very attentively at Babe*)

Galliger: (*in confusion*) No, he's—he's at the Board meeting.

Thompson: (*severely*) Young man, are you trying to be funny? Do you know who I am?

Galliger: (*limply*) You are Mister Thompson.

Thompson: (*largely*) I am J. P. Thompson, Esq., President of the Board of Education. Professor Grindem is not at the Board meeting. No one knows that so well as I, I venture to state. We have been waiting for Professor Grindem one hour, young man, exactly one hour.

Galliger: (*blankly*) You have?

Babe: (*gracefully coming forward*) Mrs. Grindem is at home, Mr. Thompson. Shall I tell her you are here?

Wright: (*rising and going to Mr. Thompson*) Professor Grindem was unavoidably detained at the office this morning, Mr. Thompson. Permit me to explain.

Thompson: Certainly, Professor. I shall be most happy. (*he bows to Babe*) Let us proceed to the building, Professor.

(*They go together.*)

Frank: (*after a silence*) Wright's a brick!

Galliger: I'm a chump!

Babe: You certainly are! What made you say that—of *all* things?

Bessie: Yes, of all things on earth! You might have known what was up.

Frank: If poor old Grindem *is* playing hookey you oughtn't to peach!

Babe: He isn't playing hookey. Somebody's waylaid him.

Galliger: (*distressfully*) Do you think I gave him a black eye? Great Scott, I'm sorry!

Babe: (*soothingly*) Don't you mind. J. P. Thompson, Esquire (*imitating his voice and manner*) knows Professor can't be in ten places at once. Professor Wright'll fix it all up. You know he's death on explanations.

Galliger: Wright's a brick! He can have a slice of my pie.

(*A messenger boy appears at the screen door, mopping his face.*)

Boy: Grindem in?

Galliger: No, what do you want?

Boy: Do you know where he's at?

Frank: No. What do you want?

Boy: Grindem! (*disappears at one bound.*)

Frank: I would't blame "Prof." for hiding under the barn!

Galliger: Nor I! But they'd crawl under after him.

Bessie: (*looking up from her writing*) Do any of you know where Jack Huntoon was born? And say, is Dan Thurston's father a lawyer, or what?

Frank: (*taking up his hat and small roll of MS.*) Put him down "Or What." Galliger, you tell "Prof." that I—

(*There is a step and Professor Grindem walks to the door, opens it, and comes in. They all rise, Bessie dropping several things.*)

Grindem: Good morning. (*smiles somewhat wanly, and goes to the hat rack.*) It

is a beautiful morning. (*takes off his gloves and hangs up his hat.*) But it is warm for June. (*turns around*) Do you wish to speak to me? (*looks at each in turn.*)

Bessie: Yes, Professor, I want to know what you think about writing the History in——

Babe: Did you promise the Webster Club that they might have——

Frank: (*with Senior dignity*) I called to ask if you consider Ball's arguments——

(*Enter Mary.*)

Mary: Perfessor, there was a 'phone call just after you left. I wrote it down (*gives bit of paper*). And Mr. MacMaster's man came with the wood, and Mr. Fletcher sent word that if you want them boxes——

Grindem: (*taking up his mail and running over the letters*) What wood?

Mary: The wood Mr. MasMaster's man brought. He said it was the best they had.

Grindem: (*studying the superscription of a letter*) I didn't order any wood. What are you talking about?

Mary: The wood Mr. MacMaster's man brought. Mrs. Grindem was busy, so I—I just let him put it in the cellar.

Grindem: You did? (*opens a letter*) Well, he'll have to take it out of the cellar. (*reads with knitted brows.*)

Mary: Yes, sir. And Mr. Fletcher says if you want them boxes you must send over this afternoon. And that telephone man wanted you to ring him up right away, he said. It's very important. (*Grindem reads, unhearing.*) Did you hear, Professor?

Grindem: (*looking up with a start*) Eh? I said he'd have to take it out of the cellar.

Mary: I said that the man that telephoned you——

Grindem: Yes, yes, Mary, I'll see to the man. (*Mary goes.*) Now, (*he lowers the letter slowly*) you were saying, Galliger,——

Galliger: I have been appointed a committee of one to ask you if you will make a short address tonight for the Glee Club, Professor. You know it's our first public concert.

Grindem: Yes, I see. And you, Miss Bessie?

Bessie: (*shoving back her hat with agitation*) I can't get started on this Class History! I've tried a dozen times. I thought if you would help me get a start, you know——

Grindem: (*gazing at her absently*) A good start is very important. What is *your* trouble, Frank?

Frank: It's about my oration. I am afraid some of it isn't right—cannot be proved. Ball says that if the atmosphere of Mars is——

Babe: Oh, is your oration about Mars? I've been dying to know! Jack said it was scientific!

Frank: (*straightening up*) It is scientific! If the hypothesis that Mars is inhabited isn't scientific——

Galliger: (*grinning*) And idealistic and monotheistic and philosophic——

Grindem: And what did you want to see me about, Miss Margaret?

Babe: (*with engaging dignity*) Why, Professor, it is too bad to trouble you, but we are in all kinds of difficulty about

the Junior play. Things are awfully mixed.

Galliger: (*nodding*) Yes, all wrinkled up like Egg-O-See! (*Grindem only looks at Babe gravely.*)

Babe: We have hired Everett Hall for Wednesday night and paid for it, and everything, and so have the Websters. They won't give up, and we have to have it, that's all. Professor Wright told Bob Martin—

Galliger: (*scornfully*) Don't you know Bob Martin? He gets everything upside down and backwards.

Grindem: (*sinks into a chair*) Never mind about that now. What did Wright tell Bob?

Babe: He told Bob we could have it *sure*. I suppose he forgot he had promised.

Grindem: (*patiently*) 'We?'

Babe: The Juniors, I mean. You know the Freshmen do the decorating for the Junior play this year,—make all the arrangements, and Bob is chairman of the committee. They are blaming us for getting into this scrape and it isn't our fault. If Professor Wright hadn't told Bob—

Grindem: Oh, I see. Well, we'll have to take up these troubles one at a time. (*Rises, gathering up mail, papers, and a book or two.*) Come into the study, all of you in turn. What did you say you wanted, Galliger?

Galliger: (*fingering his cap*) Want you to make a speech to-night. At the Glee Club. Only a few words about the Club, you know; pat us on the back. At the Duval at 8 o'clock. You needn't stay for the stunts of you haven't time, but we couldn't have anybody else introduce us, you know.

Grindem: (*walking towards an inner door*) All right, Galliger. I'll try to say a few words. But I may not be able to stay for the program.

Galliger: (*turning at the screen door*) That'll be all right, Professor. We'll understand. I wanted to ask you about the Red's banquet, but you are in a hurry—

Grindem: (*anxiously*) What's the matter with their banquet?

Galliger: Well, you see, sir, you've put the Senior reception the same night as the Red's banquet, and the fellows are kicking.

Grindem: I did!

Galliger: But we can fix it; don't mind about us. The Reds don't want to balk the procession, and we'll fix it up O. K.

Grindem: I can't think how I made such a mistake. Well, you come in and see me—let me see—let me see. Come at 2 o'clock, and we'll see what can be done. And tell the boys I didn't mean—

Galliger: They know you didn't, 'Prof.' That's all right; that's all right. We can fix it up. (*goes.*)

Grindem: Now, whoever's waited the longest come first. (*goes, through the inner door.*)

Babe: That's you, Frank.

Frank: (*apologetically*) Well, I'm in such an awful hurry, if you don't really mind—

Babe: (*waving him away*) Go ahead. It's my turn next. (*Frank goes.*) . . . Bess, *you'll* have writers' paralysis!

Bessie: (*without looking up*) I'll have worse than that if I don't get this done.

Babe: (*taking box of chocolates and settling herself comfortably*) It'll be a long wait if it's his oration. . . . I'm glad Galliger had the presence of mind to bring something to eat. . . . At least there can't any Websters get at him till I do! (*falls into a wide-eyed retrospection.*)

Act II.

(The office of Professor Grindem, Rafton High School, Wedensday morning, June 5, at 9 o'clock. A row of plain chairs stand against a side wall, "Audience Row," where people sit while waiting 'an audience" with Professor Grindem.. Enter the Professor, hands full of letters and a newspaper. He takes off his hat and coat, hangs them up on the wall, puts on a thin alpaca coat, and seats himself at his desk, whistling cheerfully. Enter, presently, Miss Sophia Spalding.

Grindem: (*without looking up from his letter*) Good morning.

Miss S.: (*airily*) Good morning, Professor.

Grindem: (*rising hastily*) Ah, Miss Spalding, I am glad to see you. Will you be seated?

Miss S.: (*draws a chair near the desk*) I wish, Professor, to consult you in regard to the arrangement of the stage in Act V. It is, as you know, a very difficult thing with our limited resources, to present these old English plays with anything like adequate effect.

Grindem: But, my dear Miss Spalding, I know nothing of the Junior play. I have left the matter to you absolutely.

Miss S.: (*affably*) But when I have told you about it you will know. I propose to put the situation, the dramatic situation, clearly before you. Now, the incident, briefly stated, is this: Tony Lumpkin, having hoodwinked his mother, Mrs. Hardcastle—

Grindem: (*twisting uneasily*) But Professor Wright will know what to do without any explanation. You had better consult with him.

Miss S.: (*with graceful reproach*) No one knows so well as *you*, Professor. How could we do without your advice and counsel? You grasp things so quickly—so easily! It is no wonder that we all come straight to you. A word—a hint—and all is clear, all goes smoothly again. We could not—

Grindem: (*glancing at his letters*) You were saying, Miss Spalding, that Tony Lumpkin—

Miss S.: (*leaning back comfortably, and opening a tiny fan*) It is really a very warm morning. Yes, I was going to present the dramatic situation. Tony Lumpkin, who, you know, is the broad comedian, has made his mother believe—

(*Enter Babe, Woodward, looking upset and indignant.*)

Babe: Professor, what do *you* think? The Sophomores want to present their flowers—

Grindem: (*blandly, waving her aside*) Have a seat, Miss Woodward. I am consulting with Miss Spalding now.

Babe: Oh, I beg your pardon, Professor, but I am so worried! It is too late to change everything and the Juniors won't listen to reason. They say it's not fair—

Grindem: Have a seat, Miss Woodward. You were saying, Miss Spalding—? (*Babe sits down in "Audience Row."*)

Miss S.: Where were we? Oh, yes; Tony Lumpkin, who is the funny man—

(*The door bursts open and Galliger Gurdy rushes in, in baseball togs.*)

Galliger: I say, "Prof." the Centerville Champions have challenged the Rafton Reds at last! Hurrah for us!

Grindem: That's good! That's good! I told you to wait! When did it come?

Galliger: Got it this morning through the mail. I tell you what I think. That manager of theirs, what's his name—Murry,—why he got to sizing things up and he realized that the Reds—

Miss S.: (*coldly*) Tony Lumpkin has made his mother think that they are—

Galliger: Beg pardon, Miss Spalding, I didn't think. But it's got to be settled right away. One cannot put off accepting a challenge, you know.

Miss S.: But *I* am consulting Professor Grindem now.

Babe: (*firmly*) And I come next. My business simply cannot wait. Dan must know so he can fix his speech, though I don't think it's fair to make him fix it!

Grindem: Sit down, Galliger. I'll see you in a minute. Yes, the challenge ought to to be answered immediately. I knew it would come. I said so all along. Did they set any time?

Galliger: (*sitting down beside Babe*) Time? You mean limit?

Grindem: No; time for the game.

Miss S.: (*archly*) You're a boy again, Professor, when it comes to baseball!

Grindem: Well, the boys have worked faithfully this year, and they deserve encouragement.

Babe: Oh, of course! *Always* the boys!

Grindem: Galliger, kindly open that door. It's very warm in here. Thank you. Now, Miss Spalding, it would be much better for you to consult ProfessorWright in regard to this matter. He has kept

in touch with the play all along, you see, and he can advise you intelligently.

Miss S.: (*rising with dignity*) Certainly, Professor, if you are not interested—

Grindem: I am interested, very much interested, Miss Spalding. Of course, I am interested, but everything is crowding now—

Miss S.: (*gathering up her books*) I would not intrude—

Grindem: (*desperately, rising*) You are not intruding, Miss Spalding. Most assuredly not. If I really knew anything about the matter I should be most happy—

(*Enter Bessie Tapping, hat on one side, open notebook in hand.*)

Bessie: (*going straight to the desk*) Professor, how would it do to have each one tell about himself—a sort of dialogue?

Miss S.: I will consult Professor Wright. Possibly *he* will have time to advise me. (*goes out in high dudgeon.*)

Bessie: (*with awe*) Oh my, was Miss Spalding talking with you? That's too bad, only I am in such a dreadful rush, and Frank says if I don't hurry, he can't typewrite this for me.

Grindem: (*wearily*) Miss Spalding was just going. Will you not be seated? (*waves her toward "Audience Row."*)

Bessie: But I can't wait, you see. Frank won't do this unless I come right back. He's going to do it on the typewriter for me, and he's got to meet his father at half-past ten.

Grindem: Well, Miss Bessie, under the circumstances, I might—

Babe: I am next, Professor. I came in before Galliger. Now, truly, didn't I?

Grindem: (*beginning anew on his letters*) I must read my mail before I talk with any of you. (*Bessie sits down beside Galliger. He produces a package of gum which he proffers to the girls. There succeeds a silence.*)

(*Enter Mame Hensel, smartly gowned.*)

Mame: (*going directly up to the desk*) Good morning, Professor.

Grindem: (*looking up with knitted brows*) Good morning, Miss Hensell. Won't you be—er—seated?

Mame: (*calmly*) No, I thank you, I cannot stay. I want to consult you about the presentation of the Sophomore flowers. At the Junior play tonight, you know. They seem to think—

Grindem: Yes, yes, Miss Hensell, presently. But just now I must—

Mame: (*calmly and courteously*) But it must be settled one way or the other, Professor, right now, and you are the one to settle it. I want them brought up at the close of Act III. That is the proper time. That is when things are always presented; at the close of Act III.

Babe: (*springs up and comes to the desk*) It doesn't matter what always is! I guess we can do as we please! The Sophs want to present them at the close of the fourth act, and I don't see why not. Dan Mitchell says his speech will fit better then.

Grindem: His speech? Is Dan making a speech?

Babe: Yes, Dan is to make the presentation speech on the part of the Sophs, and he ought to be consulted, I should think. His speech fits better then because he starts it with a quotation from the play; where Marlowe says, "Crown

me; shadow me with laurels." That's the opening of Dan's speech and it's fine—so graceful and apropos!

Mame: What does that matter? Let him write another speech!

Babe: Another speech? Write another speech! And the play tonight? He can't write speeches while you wait!

Mame: Well, as I am to receive the flowers and make the response, I think I ought to be consulted.

Grindem: (*leaning back resignedly and looking from one to the other*) What are your reasons for wanting them presented at the close of the Third Act, Miss Hensell?

Mame: Who ever heard of presenting things at any other time? That is the proper time.

Babe: (*scornfully*) "The proper time!" As if that mattered! I hate to do things the way they have been done from the beginning, world without end, Amen! (*Galliger giggles and assumes a mock attitude of reverence.*)

Grindem: (*unsmiling*) Why not take them up at the beginning, before the Prologue?

Mame: Of, I couldn't receive them until after I have appeared! Fancy my tripping out to take some flowers before the audience knows who I am! Don't you see I couldn't? Besides, it's not the proper time! In all the big New York theaters—

Babe: As if it matters what they do in New York! Rafton isn't New York!

Mame: No, apparently it is *not*.

Grindem: Well, who is to settle it?

Babe and Mame: You, Professor!

Grindem: In that case, I'll have to see Dan. If his speech is all ready, I don't see how we can ask him to change it. Tell Dan to come—

(*Enter Mrs. Grindem with white parasol and dainty market basket.*)

Mrs. G.: John, don't you think that (*drops parasol which Galliger springs to pick up*) Oh, thank you, Mr. Gurdy! How are you today? (*Babe returns to "Audience Row" and Mame slips out, head up.*)

Galliger: I am very well, thank you, Mrs. Grindem. (*returns to his place beside Babe.*)

Mrs. G.: John, don't you think—(*searches for something in her handbag*) don't you think it would be nice—

Grindem: (*sighing*) Yes, Martha?

Mrs. G.: (*sinking into a chair*) Don't you think carnations would be pretty favors? I am on my way to order things for tonight.

Grindem: Tonight?

Mrs. G.: Certainly. For the reception we give the Juniors after the play. Don't be stupid. How much cream do you think I ought to order?

Grindem: (*fingering his letters absently*) Do you mean how many gallons?

Mrs. G.: (*drawing off her gloves and reaching for a pencil.*) Yes, dear. Ice cream does not come by the yard!

Grindem: Well, let me see. There are seventeen in the class, and with the Decoration Committee—Miss Woodward, how many are there on the Freshman Committee?

Babe: (*turning from a conversation with Gal-*

liger) You mean the Committee for the Junior Play, Professor?

Grindem: Yes, ushers and all, how many Freshmen will assist?

Babe: (*counting hurriedly on her fingers*) Let me see. Ushers and ticket-sellers and all there will be—there will be—eleven, thirteen, fourteen,—just fourteen, Professor.

Mrs. G.: (*figuring on paper*) Fourteen and seventeen; that's twenty-one, isn't it?

Grindem: Thirty-one, my dear, thirty-one.

Mrs. G.: (*thoughtfully*) Thirty-one; thirty-one. And nine is forty. (*Professor opens a letter and reads*) And nine is forty. Well, I guess five bricks will be enough. What kinds of cakes shall I order?

Grindem: Any old kind. You must attend to such details, my dear. I am not hostess.

Mrs. G.: I should think you would care about the Junior reception.

Grindem: But I do not know what the young folks like. Their tastes may have changed since I was a boy. I do care, but I haven't read my mail yet.

Mrs. G.: Well, it is very hard to do things all by yourself, and I know very little about the school, really. Miss Woodward, what kind of cake do the Juniors like?

Babe: (*rapturously*) Oh, chocolate cake! I just love it! Chocolate and—and fig! Fig cake is delicious!

Bessie: (*looking up*) And sponge cake; 'most everybody likes sponge cake, I think.

Galliger: Give 'em some good plain pound cake. It beats the sky-scraper cake all out!

Babe: (*dimpling*) "Sky-scraper cake!" What

is that? I thought I knew every sort of cake. (*While they are talking of sky-scraper cake" Mrs. Grindem whispers to her husband, and he gives her some money, then some more.*)

Galliger: Layer cake, I think they call it. A whole lot of flat cakes held together by stuff that sticks to your fingers.

Babe: (*giggling luxuriously*) "Sky-scraper cake!" Galliger, you are a case!

Bessie: That's good enough for the Class History—if you were a Senior!

Galliger: If you are going to confine yourself to Senior jokes, your History will be about as snappy as a weather report!

Mrs. G.: (*rising*) I must be going. It is a very warm morning, and I have to go clear down to the Central Market. Fig cake and chocolate—thank you, MissWoodward. (*To her husband*) You'll be home to luncheon?

Grindem: I don't know, my dear. I can't tell. I may not be able to get away. There is a Board meeting at eleven-thirty.

Mrs. G.: That old Board! They always meet when you are the busiest! You ought to take time to eat! Pity they couldn't meet twice a day! Well, good-bye! (*goes.*)

Grindem: (*briskly*) Good-bye. Now, Galliger, about that challenge?

Babe: You haven't settled about the Sophs yet, Professor. I say let them give them after the play. Why not?

Bessie: (*chewing her pencil*) Or at the reception tonight. That would be a nice time, I think. Or wouldn't it?

Grindem: You and Miss Hensell and Dan will have to settle that. Or no, let Miss Hensell and Dan settle it. They are

the ones most concerned. Tomorrow afternoon, Galliger, might do for the game.

Galliger: No, sir; we couldn't work up an interest by that time. And it'll have to be advertised, and the tickets sold, and—

Bessie: Now, I say, Galliger, let *me* talk to the Professor just a minute.
(*Enter J. P. Thompson, Esq.*)

Thompson: Good morning, Professor. Fine morning, sir, fine morning. Is there going to be a Board meeting here today?

Grindem: (*rising*) Yes, Mr. Thompson, there is; at half-past eleven. It is now (*he consults watch*) quarter to eleven. Will you be seated?

Thompson: I called the meeting for eleven, but by a mistake it has been announced for a half hour later, I see.

Grindem: It has. I do not know who made the mistake. I cannot be ready until half-past, I am afraid.

Thompson: Do not let me detain you. Business is business. I will wait here. You are in demand these days, Professor. You are a busy man, sir, a busy man.

Grindem: (*mopping his brow*) I am. (*Mr. Thompson seats himself in the last chair in "Audience Row." Galliger stops chewing gum, Babe opens a book and Bessie writes more quietly.*)

(*Enter Miss Cameron in natty frock, auto hat and veil.*)

Miss Cam.: Professor, may I speak to you a moment? (*Babe starts and looks up.*)

Grindem: (*rising and bowing*) Certainly, Miss Cameron, with pleasure. What can I do for you?

Miss Cam.: The Senior girls have appointed me a

committee of one to ask you if you think it necessary for us to wear gloves tomorrow night? It's the proper thing for Commencement, of course,—we know that, but some of us want to and some of us don't.

Grindem: (*deferentially*) What do you think yourself, Miss Cameron?

Miss Cam.: (*with an engaging smile*) Oh, I think it would be nicer not to; so much simpler and more girlish. (*Babe and Bessie look at each other significantly*)

Grindem: (*gravely*) Much simpler, I think, Miss Cameron, and very—er—very much more in keeping with school girls.

Miss Cam.: (*rising*) Then I can report that you say—

Grindem: (*rising*) That I suggest only, Miss Cameron.

Miss Cam.: (*smiling that bewitching smile*) I mean that you suggest that we do not wear gloves; that you think it is prettier not to. Oh, I am so glad!

Grindem: I suggest that you do not, Miss Cameron.

Miss Cam.: (*effusively*) That is *so* kind of you, Professor. You never fail us. I am *so* much obliged to you.

Grindem: (*accompanying her to the door*) It is a pleasure to help you—the young ladies, I mean.

Miss Cam: (*at the door*) Thank you. Good-bye, Professor. *Good-bye!* (*goes.*)

Grindem: (*with much gravity*) Goodbye, Miss Mildred. (*He returns to his desk.*)

Thompson: It that the young lady from Philadelphia?

Grindem: Yes, that is Miss Cameron—Miss Mildred Cameron, and she is a brilliant

girl. (*Babe nudges Bessie, and Galliger looks at the ceiling.*)

Thompson: (*thoughtfully*) She graduates this year, does she not?

Grindem: (*coldly*) She does.

Thompson: Will she return to Philadelphia after Commencement?

Grindem: (*more coldly*) As to that I am not able to state, Mr. Thompson.

(*Enter a carpenter, with a hammer, and wearing a striped apron.*)

Grindem: Well?

Carpenter: Perfessor, will you jes' step 'round and look at them lockers?

Grindem: Why, Williams, I really haven't time this morning. What's the trouble?

Carpenter: Them locks ain't the right kind. I tole the boss they wasn't. You'd better come and settle it. He says they'll do; I says they won't.

Grindem: (*writing*) Well, I'll come in a minute. (*Carpenter lumbers out.*)

(*Professor Wright appears at the door, bows to Mr. Thompson, comes in and sits down in "Audience Row."*)

Grindem: (*starting out*) Good morning, Wright! Want to see me?

Wright: Yes; a little matter has come up at the office, and you—

Grindem: I'll be back in a minute. Can you wait?

Wright: (*consults watch*). No, I'll be back later.

Grindem: Are you in a hurry? I wish you'd come and look at those lockers. Williams says the locks won't do.

Wright: (*rising*) Yes, indeed. I knew they wouldn't. (*They go out together.*)

Galliger: When's our time coming? I'm getting gray-headed!

Bessie: (*dolefully*) Maybe not at all. It looks that way. (*Mr. Thompson gets up and goes out.*)

Babe: Well, I'm glad Millie Cameron knows *what to wear!*

Galliger: Steady, Babe, steady! Put sand on the track. You're sliding!

Babe: Oh, well, what right has she to dash in here and talk to 'Prof.' when we've been waiting an hour!

Bessie: And about gloves! The idea of worrying Professor this morning about gloves! That's what I say. She has no right.

Galliger: She has the right of a pretty girl; a right recognized everywhere, by gentlemen and savage alike.

Babe: 'Pretty girl!' Do you think she's pretty?

Galliger: In my humble judgment, Miss Woodward, Millie Cameron is—
(*Frank Sawyer comes to the door, looks at the three and gives a prolonged whistle.*)

Frank: 'Prof.' in?

Babe: (*savagely*) Do you see him anywhere?

Frank: Ah, the infant's nerves are evidently frazzled! Has he been here this morning?

Galliger: Yes, and so has everybody else on earth!

Frank: (*grinning*) 'Audience Row' is not in a pretty temper this morning! Bessie Tapping, if you want me to run off that stuff for you you had better hand it over.

Bessie: But I got to see Professor first. Can't

you do it this afternoon?

Frank: Can't possibly. Got other fish to fry. Well, so long! Shall I send you all something to eat? Some sandwiches, perhaps?

Babe: Go about your business—if you have any!

Frank: (*bowing*) Dear Miss Woodward, yours to command. (*goes away whistling.*)

Babe: The Seniors have been intolerable all week. They think nobody ever graduated before!

Galliger: Put sand on the track! You're sliding!

(*Enter a large fussy woman, followed by a uniformed boy with some hand luggage.*)

The Woman: Is this Professor John Grindem's office?

Galliger: (*rising*) Yes, Madam.

The Woman: Is he in?

Galliger: (*very gravely*) Not so far as I can see, Madam.

The Woman: Where is he? (*to the boy*) Put down those things and wait in the hall. (*the boy goes.*)

Galliger: He was just stepped out, Madam.

The Woman: (*looking sharply at Galliger through lorgnette.*) Out where, young man?

Galliger: Out of the room Madam. He's somewhere in the building.

The Woman: (*sitting down heavily*) I suppose this is his desk? *Dear* John!

Galliger: (*respectfully*) Yes, Madam.

The Woman: How like him it all looks! Books and papers and maps and all that! So like him! (*There is a silence. 'Au-*

dience Row' studies her curiously.)

The Woman: (*with empressement*) I am Mrs. William Morton.

Babe: Yes?

The Woman: His mother-in-law, you know.

Galliger: (*dropping his cap*) Oh, Madam, you are?

The Woman: (*taking a fan from her traveling bag*) I stopped here to surprise him first. I have never visited them before,(*sighing*) never before. I have not seen him for five years . . . And this is where his days are spent. What a busy fellow he is! . . Dear boy!

Galliger and Babe: Yes, Madam.

Bessie: Yes, indeed.

The Woman: (*sighing*) I am so glad to be here!

Galliger: I presume, Madam, you are. (*Professor Grindem steps into the room briskly, and stops, transfixed*).

The Woman: (*rises*) John, do you know me? (*rushes towards him*) I have come for commencement (*throws her arms about his neck*) and to spend the summer!

Grindem: (*weakly*) Mrs. Morton! . . You have!

Act III.

(*The stage of the Duval Theater, Thursday afternoon, June 6th, at four o'clock. In the rear, on a stepladder, Galliger Gurdy is draping two American flags against the wall, Babe Woodward superintending the job. At one side a carpenter is fixing the floor, pounding and whistling alternately. Miss Cameron is practicing her valedictory, Mame Hensell coaching her.*)

Babe: Lift that fold to the right. Fix it like the other one.

Galliger: I can't see the other one. That's what I brought you for.

Mame: (*to Miss Cameron*) Now, dear, commence again.

Miss Cam.: "As we stand together upon the threshold of a new life" (*carpenter pounds and pounds*) "As we stand together—" (*carpenter pounds. Mame makes a gesture of silence.*)

Mame: Stand closer to the edge. Your voice will carry better then. Are you going to hold your manuscript— (*carpenter gives a resounding pound*) all the time? I thought you said you were— (*carpenter whistles and pounds.*)

Miss Cam.: (*in a shriek*) I am. Would you?

Babe: More this way, Galliger. And higher— lots higher. That fold is as stiff as a war ship! Look, Mame, isn't that *dreadful!*

Galliger: Maybe you'd like to try it? (*drops the flag straight against the wall and sits down on the ladder*) I'll resign cheerfully. If you think this is a snap, Babe Woodward, you're mightily mistaken.

Babe: I know it's mighty hard to do it but I can't. I'm afraid as death of stepladders.

Galliger: Would you like to try it, Mame?

Mame: No, I haven't time, but I'm not afraid of stepladders.

Miss Cam.: (*smiling*) I think Mr. Gurdy is doing very well. That one is beautifully draped.

Galliger: (*lifting his ball cap*) I thank you, Miss Cameron. You have an artistic eye, and when a fellow is trying to do his best—

Babe: (*tartly*) Go on, Galliger! Hurry up! I can't stay here all day!

Mame: (*to Miss Cameron*) And we'd better hurry up, too. It's four o'clock. I wish Miss Spalding would come.

Miss Cam.: Oh, I'd rather have you, lots rather. Let's—(*carpenter pounds*) Let's skip the first. I know that part like a book. Let's—(*carpenter pounds*) Let's commence at the "And now, dear fellow-students" part.

Mame: All right. I like that part *so* much.

Miss Cam.: (*pensively*) Oh, do you? Do you think it is affecting enough?

Mame: Well I should think so! Do you want us all dissolved in tears? Go on. (*Galliger and Babe suspend operations to watch her.*)

Miss Cam.: (*striking an attitude*) "And now, my dear fellow students, to whom these last words come fraught with memories of a thousand happy hours, bright with the promise of a thousand youthful dreams, the perfume of a thousand hopes,—to you, my dear fellow students—" (*Miss Spalding and*

Professor Grindem come on the stage unobserved.)

Mame: "Fraught?" I thought that was "ladened"—"ladened with memories of a thousand happy hours."

Mis Cam: Miss Spalding said (*carpenter pounds and whistles*) said (*pound*) said "fraught" was better. I had it "ladened" first. Which do you like better?

Miss S.: (*coming forward*) I thought "fraught" was more euphoneous, that was all.

Miss Cam.: Oh, are you there? And Professor! Mercy, did you hear me? How am I doing it?

Miss S.: Beautifully. But you must be more composed and you must talk louder. Your voice—(*carpenter pounds two pounds.*)

Grindem: (*to carpenter*) Here, man, we can't have you raising such a row around here. What are you doing?

Carpenter: It's a squeaky board, Professor. I'm putting in another one. Been trying to fix it for three days, but there has been so blame much practicin'—

Grindem: Yes, yes, of course it's not your fault, but how soon'll you be done?

Carpenter: In about a minute.

Miss S.: (*gracefully .facetious*) About how many pounds, Mr. Carpenter?

Carpenter: (*grinning*) I think about six, Miss. There are three nails, and I calculate on two pounds to each nail.

Grindem: Well, pound 'em in and go. Wait, please, Miss Cameron, till he gets through.

Carpenter: Here goes. (*He pounds six heavy pounds and one light one.*)

Galliger: A little one for luck. (*Carpenter goes out.*)

Miss S.: Now, we had better commence at the beginning.

(*Enter a man with a palm in a pot.*)

Palm Man: Where does this go? I have to have this place cleared out.

Grindem: "Cleared Out?"

Miss S.: "Cleared out?"

Palm Man: Yes, cleared out. If I am to dec'rate this stage it's time I got at it.

Miss Cam.: (*in dismay*) But I have to practice—

Grindem: Can't you bring the plants in and set them anywhere for the time being?

Palm Man: No, sir, I can't. (*sets down the palm and crosses his arms*) I've been here three times today and every time somebody was a-sayin' a piece, and now its harf-parst four and—

Miss Cam.: But what will I do? Professor, what will I do?

Galliger: Go to the chapel. That's quiet as a graveyard.

Miss Cam.: But, Professor,—

Palm Man: (*lifting the palm*) If I am to dec'rate this 'ere stage—

Grindem: (*very gently*) Perhaps, Miss Mildred, you had better not try to do anything more here at present.

Miss S.: Yes, we had better go to the chapel. (*To Miss Cameron*) It will be all right. You've about got it, anyway.

Miss Cam.: But if I fail tonight! Oh, what if I fail tonight?

Galliger: (*cheerfully*) "In the bright lexicon of Youth, there is no such word as fail," Miss Cameron.

Babe: It'll be in *your* bright lexicon, Galliger Gurdy, if you don't look out!

Mame: Come on, it's getting late.

Miss Cam.: (*preparing to go*) What time this evening are we to be here, Professor?

Grindem: At eight o'clock sharp, Miss Mildred. Eight o'clock sharp.

Galliger: Who ever heard of sweet girl graduates being on time? Tell 'em seven, "Prof." and maybe you can open the ball at eight.

Miss Cam.: Oh, we'll be here if we promise. You know we will, Professor.

Grindem: (*sitting down in one of the two chairs on the stage*) Yes, Miss Mildred, I think you will.

Mame: (*taking Miss Cameron's arm*) Come on, Mildred, if you're going. We've got to dress for dinner yet. (*Mame, Miss Cameron and Miss Spalding go.*)

Grindem: (*looking around the room, critically*) Galliger, that flag's too high.

Galliger: (*rising to his feet on the stepladder*) Too high from which? The other flag or the floor?

Grindem: The floor. All the wall space should be covered—that is, all that the audience can see.

Babe: No, the people's heads will come to there. (*indicating on the wall.*)

Galliger: That's how I figured it. You can't see through the heads of the Board. They're too thick.

Grindem: (*grinning*) You are right, the flag needn't come clear down. Couldn't you get any more flags? Only two makes it look skimpy.

Galliger: (*turning reproachfully*) Now, "Prof."

if you're going to sit there and—

Grindem: I know, I know. It's easy enough to sit in a chair and suggest things to a man on a stepladder. (*The Palm Man comes in and puts down a palm.*) Robinson, what are you putting these palms there for? The graduates sit there.

Palm Man: Well, I would like to fin' out jes' where them bloomin' graduates air to set! First, they say one place; then they say another. Yesterday, it was here; today it is there. Perfessor Wright says there; you say here. Who's s'posed to know?

Grindem: (*meekly*) I am supposed to know.

Palm Man: Well, then, s'pose you settle it. *Where air them graduates goin' to set?*

Grindem: (*rising and indicating floor space*) The graduates sit there; leave room for twelve chairs. Back of them, the Board of Education; leave room for eight chairs.

Galliger: We don't have to decorate the back of the stage, you know. The Board furnishes the green effect.

Palm Man: (*snickering*) Where air you a-goin' to set, Perfessor?

Grindem: (*indicating*) At the left; there. By a table. Where is that table, by the way?

Babe: What table, Professor?

Grindem: I am to have a very swell table; solid mahogany. Hasn't it come?

Galliger: There's no such table 'round here. Nothing's come since I arrived.

Babe: Did you arrive at sun-up? Maybe it's behind the scenes?

Galliger: There's no table of that sort here. I've investigated the field of battle.

Grindem: (*looking at his watch*) I ordered a table from Hanley's, and they said it would be here by 2 o'clock without fail. Galliger, I wish you would—

(*Enter Bessie Tapping, hastily, hat awry. She collides with the Palm Man, who is stooping over a palm.*)

Palm Man: (*recovering his equilibrium*) Talk about your cy-*clones!* Air you a graduate?

Bessie: (*breathlessly*) Oh, I beg your pardon! I hope I didn't spoil the palm. I didn't notice you. I came to practice!

Grindem: Came to practice! You can't practice now. I hope you'll all leave your practicing till the very last minute! The man has to decorate the stage now and nobody—

Bessie: (*peeling off her gloves and unrolling her manuscript*) But I don't mind. He won't disturb me.

Grindem: But he minds. You cannot practice here.

Bessie: But I *got* to. I haven't even read this over out loud yet.

Babe: Ye gods and little fishes! You haven't?

Grindem: (*severely*) Yes, Miss Bessie, this is a little late. Galliger, run around to Hanley's, will you, and ask them about that table? Tell them to send it right away. (*Galliger hurries down the ladder and out.*)

Bessie: (*taking position and commencing to read*)

"First on the list, as you may surmise,
Is a trim little girl, pretty and wise;
Fanny Farren—"

Palm Man: (*stepping up to her*) I got to put this palm where you're standin'. (*Babe and Professor smile at each other.*)

Bessie: (*moving a few steps and proceeding serenely*)

"Fanny Farren, clever and debonair,
With ripples of golden sunshine for hair;
She loves—"

Babe: What's "debonair," Bess?

Bessie: Oh, kind of jolly and fetching. I don't know exactly, but I had to have a rhyme for "hair." Of course I had to mention her hair.

Babe: Yes, of course. If you let her hair out you would have no excuse for putting her in. Go on. It's splendid.

Bessie: I hope it'll do. Goodness knows, I've worked like a Turk getting it ready! Nobody would help me; I've walked miles and miles to write it! (*reads*)

"Wi ripples of golden sunshine for hair;
She loves Higher Mathematics and Greek,
And yearns to take to the stump and speak
Of woman's wrongs and inform' e men
How to run the country, and w y, and when;
She knows—"

Babe: Oh, that's fine! Fine! It's Fanny Farran over again! How could you make it rhyme so easy? It sounds as good as Longfellow or Pope.

Bessie: (*without pride*) Oh, it's easy when you're started once. It's like rolling down hill; you can hardly stop.

"She knows everything that women have done
From the present down to the Great Year One;
She can describe them in every age,
Civilized, cannibal and savage;—"

Palm Man: (*coming in with a plant*) Excuse me, Miss, but you'll have to move over. These pams gotter be fixed.

Bessie: I reckon the speakers have to have some place to stand! I'm almost on the edge now!

Palm Man: Dunno nothin' 'bout the speakers, but Perfessor he said to go ahead with the pams.

Bessie: Professor, are we going to stand on this stage or not? This man wants to put a palm here. I've got to stand somewhere, I guess!

Palm Man: I don't want to put a palm there; never said I did. But I got to have room to move in. It's gettin' late.

Grindem: You certainly have. Miss Bessie, this man has to arrange the stage, and you had better go—

(*Enter Frank Sawyer, immaculately dressed.*)

Grindem: (*looking him over*) Did you come to practice? (*Palm Man goes out.*)

Frank: (*airily*) Practice? Oh, no, I haven't practiced for two days.

Bessie: You haven't! My, I wish I was smart!

Frank: (*airily*) I wish you were. Who fixed the flags?

Babe: (*defiantly*) Galliger!

Frank: Mighty artistic job. Very effective. But on the whole a little slab-sided, don't you think?

Babe: If you can do any better, go ahead. We need a man with ideas. And you needn't put on airs around here where everybody is working.

Frank: Working? It looks like it! What are you doing, Miss Woodward? Anything in particular?

Bessie: She is coaching me, that's what she is doing.

Grindem: Miss Bessie, you had better go to the chapel where you can have more room.

(*Re-enter Palm Man.*)

Palm Man: (*to Professor Grindem*) I'm going after the big pams now. It won't take

but a few minutes to fix 'em when I get back.

Grindem: But when will you get back?

Palm Man: In harf an hour or sich a matter. Jes' got to go to the store. (*goes on the lope.*)

Frank: Speedy fellow, that one.

Bessie: But, Professor, Millie Cameron is using the chapel.

Grindem: Then go to one of the recitation rooms.

A Voice: (*from the flies somewhere*(Oh John!

Grindem: (*aside*) Mrs. Morton! . . . Yes, Mother!

A Voice: (*from the flies, but nearer*) Shall I come right on the stage?(*Frank drops into a chair.*)

Grindem: (*rises*) Yes, Mother.

(*Enter Mrs. Morton. As she does so the girls giggle and sidle out.*)

Mrs. Morton: I came to see how you are getting on, John, as I was out for a walk.

Grindem: Yes, Mother.

Mrs. Morton: (*putting up her lorgnette*) You aren't nearly ready, are you? (*sits down with a heavy sigh.*)

Frank: (*rising*) Oh, it won't take long. Sit down, Professor, and view the landscape o'er.—There isn't really much to fix, Mrs. Morton, as the stage will be full of people.

Mrs. Morton: But it looks so bare! Is that the pit you read about? A theater is a desolate place in the daytime, isn't it? That flag doesn't look very well. Why don't you loop it up like the other one?

Grindem: That isn't quite finished. Galliger will

be back in a minute. These things take time.

Mrs. Morton: But you've had all day. I should think you would be all ready, waiting.

Grindem: Yes, there have been several days.

Frank: (*looking at the Professor affectionately*) The week has been full of days, hasn't it, "Prof."?

Mrs. Morton: Mercy, are you going to have those palms in a stiff row? They aren't very good palms, anyway.

Grindem: The man hasn't finished with the palms, and besides, the stage will be full of people.

Mrs. Morton: Oh, do you have the graduates sit on the stage? Won't that be nice? I haven't been to a Commencement since I was a girl.

Frank: Yes, Madam.

Mrs. Morton: And do you sit on the stage, too, John?

Grindem: (*looking up from memoranda*) I do.

Frank: You do if you live till tonight, hey "Prof."?

Mrs. Morton: (*sighing*) Yes, if we live; if we live. It is a solemn thought. We never know what an hour may bring forth. Oh, John, there was a man out there inquiring for you.

Grindem: Out where?

Mrs. Morton: (*fanning herself*) It is very warm in here. I presume places of this sort are not well ventilated. At the door in an automobile. The smell was awful. I think he was one of the Board; he looked very important, and said it was "imperative" that he see you.

Frank: Shall I swear for you, "Prof."?

Mrs. Morton: (*looking at Frank through her lorgnette*) What do you mean? John does not swear?

Frank: Of course not. That's why I offered to swear for him. Shall I see who it is, Professor?

Grindem: Thank you, Frank, I wish you would. (*Frank goes out.*)

Mrs. Morton: That flag makes me nervous. If I were a younger woman I would drape it myself.

Grindem: Galliger will fix it when he comes back.

Mrs. Morton: But it is getting late.

Grindem: It is.

Mrs. Morton: Has the man finished with the palms?

Grindem: No, the man has not finished with the palms. He has gone for some more; some large ones.

Mrs. Morton: Well, I should hope he had. These look skimpy. Are you going to have any cut flowers?

Grindem: Only one bunch. American beauties, on the table.

Mrs. Morton: What table? I do not see any table?

Grindem: The table is coming. Galliger has gone out for it.

Mrs. Morton: A good deal seems to hang on Galliger.

Grindem: (*sighing heavily*) It does. (*Aside*) Thank heaven for aGlliger.

(*Re-enter Frank, accompanied by Professor Wright.*)

Frank: (*to Professor*) He's gone. It was only Mr. Thompson.

Wright: Good evening, Mrs. Morton. Mr.

Thompson gave me his message, Professor. It was about a called meeting of the Board tomorrow.

Grindem: (*taking out his notebook*) What time?

Wright: At three-thirty. Only a brief meeting. Well, how are you getting on?

Grindem: The chairs haven't come from the building yet, nor the table, nor the large palms.

Mrs. Morton: (*with asperity*) Why don't you tell him what *has* come? It would take less time.

Wright: But they'll all be here in time. And when our pretty graduates get up here, tucked among the green like white roses—

Frank: Why, Professor, you sound like poetry! Better be careful!

Mrs. Morton: (*rising*) That is a very pretty figure of speech, I think. Innocent young girls in white, on the threshold of a new life; "Standing with reluctant feet where the brook and river meet," as the poet says. "Childhood and—

Wright: "Womanhood and childhood fleet." Childhood and—" what is the rest?

Mrs. Morton: Oh, yes, certainly. Thank you. "Womanhood and childhood fleet." It is a lovely sentiment—John, will you be home to dinner? It is nearly tonight, remember. (*goes, bowing with much deference to Wright.*)

Wright: Anything I can do for your, Professor? Can't you go home now?

Grindem: I want to see the place in order first, and the table hasn't some. But you go home and be here by eight sharp. Oh, have you seen Dawson?

Wright: Not for several days, but he knows he is to be here.

Frank: He's out of town, I think.

Grindem: The Reverend Robert Dawson? Why he is to give the Invocation tonight. You were to see him, Wright.

Wright: I did, and he said he'd be here. But that was on Monday.

Grindem: (*to Frank*) What makes you think he's out of town?

Frank: Harry said so; said his father was called away this morning. Somebody dead in Centerville, I think he said.

Grindem: (*sinking back in his chair*) Good heavens, can anything else happen? Will you see about the matter, Wright?

Wright: (*starting to go*) Certainly. I think Frank must be mistaken.

Grindem: If Dawson is out of town, get—get—who *can* you get?

Wright: I'll get somebody. Don't you worry about that. There are plenty of preachers.

Grindem: Then I'll leave it to you?

Wright: Yes, it will be attended to. Dismiss the matter entirely (*goes*).

Grindem: (*rising wearily*) Maybe I ought to go and see about it myself. Wright is so absent-minded.

Frank: Let him do it. You can't be in six places at once.

(*Re-enter Galliger.*)

Grindem: How about the table?

Galliger: The clerk didn't know anything about it.

Grindem: Didn't know anything about it?

Galliger: So I came to know if I can't go home and get—

Grindem: Didn't know anything about it? Whom did you see?

Galliger: The head clerk. Everybody else had gone, it is so late. Let me go home and send over our library table. It won't take a jiffy.

Grindem: But you'll miss your dinner.

Galliger: Well, it won't be the first time. Frank, skin up that ladder and hook up that flag and I'll go and get the table.

Frank: I can't drape a flag. I never did such a thing in my life.

Galliger: All right, you bet I can. (*To Professor*) And your table'll be here O. K., 'Prof." Hanley isn't the only man that has a mahogany table! Don't you worry! Go home and be 'aisy.' I'm your huckleberry!

Grindem: (*laying his hand on Galliger's shoulder*) I'll not worry. Galliger, you are the "noblest Roman of them all."

Frank: I'm going yb your house, Galliger. I'll send that table around.

Galliger: Here, I'll write mother a note. (*writes in a tiny notebook*) And get that transfer man at the corner of Third and Sherman, you know; opposite Tanner's drug store. Here's a quarter. (*Frank refuses it*) You come with him so he'll be sure and bring it, will you? Stay by him like a leech. (*hands the note.*)

Frank: Yes, we'll arrive instanter, the table and I.

Galliger: And carry the vase mother'll give you in your hands. Be awful careful. It's sister's. We'll have a cut-glass "vawse" for your boquet, "Prof." We are the people!

Frank: One vase, cut glass; one table, ma-

hogany. All right. So long (*goes.*)

(*Galliger climbs the ladder and drapes the flag in silence, watching Grindem covertly. The latter sits quietly, watch in hand, looking straight ahead.*)

Galliger: (*presently*) You're pretty well tuckered out, aren't you, "Prof."?

Grindem: Yes, Galliger, it's been a hard week.

Galliger: I bet you'll be glad when tomorrow comes.

Grindem: Yes, Galliger, I shall. It's been a long week.

Galliger: (*after a pause*) What are you waiting for, "Prof."?

Grindem: I want to see that the janitor arranges the chairs as they should be. He was due here two hours ago.

Galliger: Couldn't I see to it?

Grindem: No, Galliger, thank you, I'd better see to it myself.

(*There succeeds a silence, Galliger looking down at Grindem wistfully. Then he slowly steps down the ladder.*)

Galliger: (*softly*) Dear old "Prof." . . Dear old "Prof."! (*tip-toes out, carrying his cap.*)

(*Curtain falls upon the Professor, watch in hand, staring into space, uning.*)

EPILOGUE.

The Library of the Grindem home, Friday morning.

". . . The innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleave of care,
. . . sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course."
—*Macbeth.*

(Professor Grindem is discovered asleep on a couch. carefully covered with a crazy quilt. Mrs. Grindem passes in to her desk, on tip-toe, and out, twice. Mary brings a telegram, lays it on the table, and backs out cautiously. Galliger comes with a boquet of American beauties in a cut glass vase, which he places on the Professor's desk, then tip-toes out. He returns, writes a note, and pins it to the crazy quilt, moving with much caution. Mrs. Grindem comes in, sees Galliger, telegraphs on her fingers that the Professor is not to be disturbed, and they both tip-toe out. She returns in a minute and pulls down the window blinds. Grindem sleeps on.)

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